

REMARKS

Claims 8 to 19 are pending in the application, of which claim 8 and 16 are the independent claims. Favorable reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. In response, Applicants cancel Claims 1-7 and submit corresponding claims 8-19. These new claims conform better to U.S. practice and to standard English.

In particular, in claim 1, the Examiner objected to the use of the word "composed." Claim 8, which replaces claim 1, excludes the so-called objectionable language.

In addition, the Examiner rejects claim 1 because it was allegedly not clear whether a "metal silicide layer" must be formed on the oxygen impervious layer. In response, Applicants note that claim 1 does not recite a "metal silicide layer." However, claim 1 does recite the limitation that an oxygen-impervious layer exist on the substrate. This oxygen-impervious layer acts as a barrier between an applied metal layer and the substrate to prevent these two layers from commingling and forming undesirable metal silicide compounds. The step of actually applying the metal layer is not recited in claim 8 (which corresponds to cancelled claim 1). It is however added as a further limitation in claim 9 which depends on claim 8.

The Examiner rejects claim 3 as being confusing. In response, Applicants cancel claim 3 and replace it with claim 10. Claim 10 avoids the confusing language in claim 3 and is now in condition for allowance. Since claims 11-15 depend on claim 10, these claims should also be allowed.

The Examiner rejected claim 2 because it conflicted with claim 1. Claim 2 was cancelled and rewritten to correct the conflict. This resulted in a new independent claim 16, which is now in condition for allowance. Since claims 17-19 depend on claim 16, these claims should also be allowed.

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In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

No fee is believed to be due for this Amendment; however, if any fees are due, please apply such fees to Deposit Account No. 06-1050 referencing Attorney Docket 12816-018001.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-7 have been cancelled.

IN THE ABSTRACT:

[Method for fabricating a barrier layer having the following steps, namely
oxidation of a substance (1) composed of silicon in order to produce a substrate oxide (2)
on the surface of the substrate (1);
production of an oxygen-impervious layer (4) at the interface between the substrate oxide
layer (2) and the substrate (1), the oxygen-impervious layer (4), as barrier, preventing the
formation of metal silicide compounds between applied metal and the substrate silicon;
etching of the substrate oxide layer (2) until the underlying oxygen-impervious (4) is
uncovered.

Figure 3b] A method of fabricating a barrier layer includes oxidizing a silicon-containing
substrate to form a substrate oxide layer on the surface of the substrate, producing an oxygen-
impervious layer at an interface between the substrate oxide layer and the substrate, and etching
the substrate oxide layer until the underlying oxygen-impervious layer is uncovered.